AMAR CHITRA KATHA

No

THE GIANT AND THE DWARF

—A JATAKA TALE

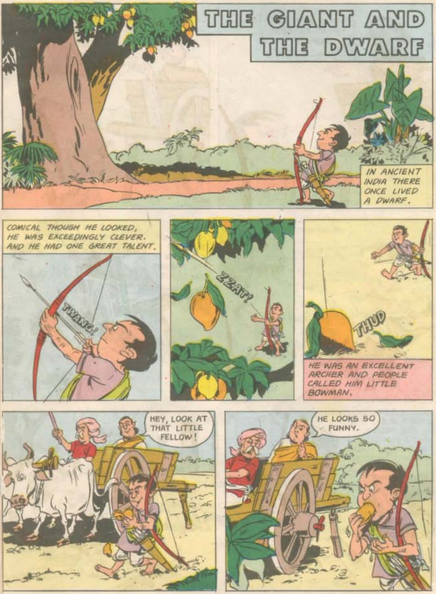


All living creatures die to be born again, so the Hindus believe. The Buddha was no exception. Legend has it that several lifetimes as a Bodhisattva went into the making of the Buddha, the Enlightened one.

The Bodhisattva came in many forms—man, monkey, deer, elephant, lion. Whatever his mortal body, he spread the message of justice and wisdom, tempered with compassion. This wisdom, the wisdom of right thinking and right living, is preserved in the Jataka tales.

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THE GIANT AND THE DWARF
IN ANCIENT INDIA THERE ONCE LIVED A DWARF.
COMICAL THOUGH HE LOOKED, HE WAS EXCEEDINGLY CLEVER. AND HE HAD ONE GREAT TALENT.
TWANG!
ZZAT!
THUD
HE WAS AN EXCELLENT ARCHER AND PEOPLE CALLED HIM LITTLE BOWMAN.
HEY, LOOK AT THAT LITTLE FELLOW!
HE LOOKS SO FUNNY.


WHERE ARE YOU GOING WITH THAT GREAT BIG BOW, GOOD SIR ?
I AM GOING TO THE PALACE TO OFFER MY SERVICES TO THE KING. I AM AN ARCHER.
AN ARCHER?
HO HO HO!
BE CAREFUL, OR YOU MAY TAKE OFF WITH ONE OF THE ARROWS YOU SHOOT!
HE! HE! HE!
I CAN'T BLAME THEM. NO ONE BELIEVES THAT A PUNY FELLOW LIKE ME CAN HANDLE A BOW AND ARROW.


HMMM... THE KING TOO, MIGHT THROW ME OUT WITHOUT GIVING ME A CHANCE TO PROVE MYSELF.
WHAT I NEED IS AN ASSISTANT.
A BIG STRONG FELLOW.
LIKE THAT MAN!
WHEW! HE IS A GIANT!


WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT ?
YOU!
HOW ODD YOU LOOK! A HUGE MAN LIKE YOU SITTING HERE AND WEAVING BASKETS!
YOU SHOULD BE DOING SOMETHING MORE ADVENTUROUS, MY FRIEND. WHAT IS YOUR NAME ?
BHIMASENA.
WHY DON'T YOU JOIN THE KING'S SERVICE AS AN ARCHER, BHIMASENA?
AN ARCHER?
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ARCHERY.
BUT I DO.
I'LL DO THE WORK. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS...


SOME TIME LATER, BHIMASENA AND LITTLE BOWMAN WENT TO THE PALACE OF THE KING OF VARANASI.
WHO ARE YOU ? WHAT BUSINESS DO YOU HAVE AT THE PALACE ?
I...I AM BHIMASENA, A MIGHTY WEAV... I MEAN, ARCHER. I HAVE COME TO OFFER MY SERVICES TO THE KING.
STOP TREMBLING!
IS HE WITH YOU ?
YES! YES!
YOU MAY GO IN.
THE KING WAS IMPRESSED BY BHIMASENA'S SIZE.
SO YOU WANT TO ENTER MY SERVICES AS AN ARCHER.
YES, YOUR MAJESTY.


YOU WON'T FIND A BETTER ARCHER ANYWHERE.
AND WHO IS THAT FELLOW?
HE'S MY SERVANT.
WELL, GOOD ARCHERS ARE HARD TO COME BY THESE DAYS. WE'LL FIND YOU A PLACE HERE.
SO BHIMASENA ENTERED THE KING'S SERVICE.
THEN SOME DAYS LATER —
DID YOU SEND FOR ME, YOUR MAJESTY?
YES, BHIMASENA.
I HAVE A TASK FOR YOU. A FEROCIOUS TIGER IS TERRORISING MY PEOPLE.
NONE OF THE MEN I SENT TO SLAY HIM HAVE COME BACK. THEY MUST ALL BE DEAD.


NOW I WANT YOU TO TRACK DOWN THE BEAST AND DESTROY HIM.
WHATEVER YOU SAY, YOUR MAJESTY.
THE KING HAS COMMANDED ME TO KILL A FIERCE TIGER WHICH IS TERRORISING HIS PEOPLE.
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, THEN ? GO RIGHT AWAY !
WHAT !
AREN'T YOU COMING ? YOU PROMISED ME THAT YOU WOULD... YOU SAID...
YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME ! I'M GOING BACK TO MY WEAVING !
KEEP CALM, BHIMASENA, KEEP CALM.
YOU DON'T NEED AN ARCHER TO GET THAT TIGER. I'LL TELL YOU WHAT TO DO. LISTEN...


SOON, BHIMASENA SET OUT FOR THE VILLAGE WHERE THE TIGER HAD LAST BEEN SEEN.
WHEN HE GOT THERE —
FRIENDS, I AM A HUNTER. THE KING HAS SENT ME TO RID YOU OF THE TIGER.
BUT I NEED MEN TO FLUSH HIM OUT OF HIS LAIR. ONCE HE IS OUT IN THE OPEN, I'LL DO THE REST.
YOU CAN TAKE ALL THE ABLE-BODIED MEN OF THIS VILLAGE WITH YOU, MY LORD. WE WILL SEND WORD TO THE OTHER VILLAGES, TOO.
WHEN BHIMASENA FINALLY ENTERED THE FOREST, HE HAD SEVERAL HUNDRED VOLUNTEERS WITH HIM.


BE READY, SIR! HE'LL COME OUT ANY MOMENT.
I AM READY. LET'S HOPE NOTHING GOES WRONG WITH LITTLE BOWMAN'S PLAN!
DID YOU HEAR THAT?
GRR-R
IT'S HIM! IT'S THE TIGER!
WHERE'S THE HUNTER? DON'T PANIC! WE'LL...
GRRR


THE VILLAGERS SET UPON THE TIGER...
...AND BEAT HIM TO DEATH.
THEY'VE KILLED HIM. GOOD! NOW FOR THE SECOND PART OF THE PLAN.
PULLING OUT A CREEPER...
...HE RUSHED BACK TO THE VILLAGERS.
WHERE IS HE? WHERE IS HE?
?


THERE, SIR! WE CLUBBED HIM TO DEATH.
OH, YOU FOOLS! THE KING HAD COMMANDED ME TO TAKE HIM BACK ALIVE.
I HAD PLANNED TO TIE A CREEPER ROUND HIS NECK AND...
I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHO KILLED HIM BEFORE I GOT BACK WITH MY CREEPER!
SIR, WE... WE DIDN'T KNOW THAT YOU... THAT THE KING ... WANTED HIM ALIVE.
PLEASE DON'T TELL THE KING WE KILLED HIM, MY LORD.
THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT HE'D DO TO US.

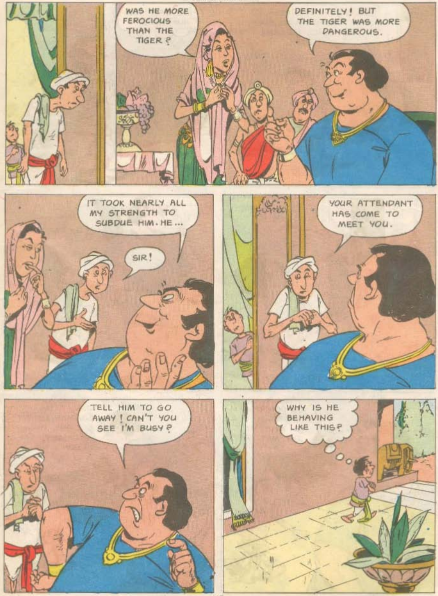

WE WILL PAY YOU WELL FOR YOUR SILENCE.
OH, WELL! I'LL TELL THE KING I KILLED HIM.
THANK YOU, SIR. THANK YOU.
BHIMASENA TOOK THE DEAD TIGER TO THE PALACE.
THE MISSION IS ACCOMPLISHED, YOUR MAJESTY.
SO I SEE.
YOU ARE INDEED A VALIANT HERO, BHIMASENA.
ACCEPT THESE GIFTS AS A TOKEN OF OUR GRATITUDE.


LATER —
DO YOU STILL WANT TO GO BACK TO YOUR WEAVING, BHIMASENA?
THAT'S A SILLY QUESTION, LITTLE BOWMAN. I CAN'T IMAGINE HOW I EVER DID IT. AND FOR SO MANY YEARS!
WEAVING BASKETS! HA! HA! HA!
THE GIANT BECAME POPULAR AT THE COURT. THEN A FEW WEEKS LATER —
YOUR MAJESTY, WE CRAVE YOUR PROTECTION.
A WILD BUFFALO IS TERRORISING TRAVELLERS ON THE SOUTHERN ROAD. HE ATTACKS ANYONE WHO PASSES THAT WAY.
SEVERAL MEN HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES ALREADY.
DELIVER US FROM THIS VILE CREATURE, O KING.
THAT BUFFALO WON'T TROUBLE YOU MUCH LONGER.


BHIMASENA!
OH! OH!
GO AND SLAY THAT BEAST! IT SHOULD BE CHILD'S PLAY FOR YOU.
YES, YOUR MAJESTY.
A WILD BUFFALO CAN BE MORE DANGEROUS THAN A TIGER. I HOPE THE LITTLE BOWMAN DOESN'T LOSE HIS NERVE.
BUT WHEN HE TOLD THE DWARF OF HIS ASSIGNMENT—
IT SHOULDN'T BE A DIFFICULT TASK FOR YOU, BHIMASENA.
FOR ME! WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY? IF YOU THINK I AM GOING TO WRESTLE WITH WILD BUFFALOES YOU ARE MISTAKEN.


I'M NOT GOING TO ENDANGER MY LIFE BY DOING YOUR WORK FOR YOU ! WE AGREED THAT YOU WOULD DO ALL THE WORK, DIDN'T WE ?
NOBODY IS ASKING YOU TO ENDANGER YOUR LIFE, BHIMASENA.
DID YOU ENDANGER YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU WENT TO KILL THE TIGER ?
AH! THE CREEPER TRICK ! NOW WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF IT MYSELF ?
WHEN BHIMASENA CAME BACK TO THE PALACE A FEW DAYS LATER, HE HAD THE DEAD BUFFALO WITH HIM.
SO YOU GOT HIM. DID YOU HAVE ANY TROUBLE ?
BHIMASENA!
NOW WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HIM ?


OUR HERO IS BACK.
LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT BUFFALO!
WELCOME HOME, BHIMASENA! I AM INDEED FORTUNATE TO HAVE YOU IN MY SERVICE.
YOU SHALL BE WELL REWARDED FOR YOUR EFFORTS.
BHIMASENA BECAME EVEN MORE POPULAR. SEVERAL FEASTS WERE GIVEN IN HIS HONOUR.
TELL US HOW YOU KILLED THE BUFFALO, BHIMASENA.
OH, IT WAS NOTHING REALLY.
HE DID PUT UP A TERRIFIC FIGHT. THE EARTH SHOOK UNDER US AS WE STRUGGLED.


WAS HE MORE FEROCIOUS THAN THE TIGER ?
DEFINITELY ! BUT THE TIGER WAS MORE DANGEROUS.
IT TOOK NEARLY ALL MY STRENGTH TO SUBDUE HIM. HE ...
SIR!
YOUR ATTENDANT HAS COME TO MEET YOU.
TELL HIM TO GO AWAY ! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M BUSY ?
WHY IS HE BEHAVING LIKE THIS?

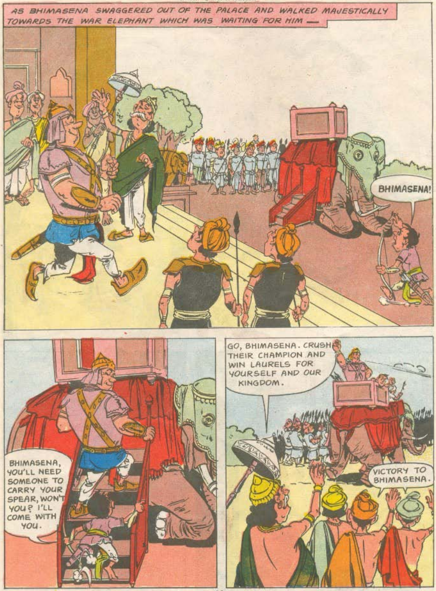

HE HAS BEEN AVOIDING ME EVER SINCE HE CAME BACK.
I'LL WAIT FOR HIM, HERE.
AH, THERE HE IS!
BHIMASENA!
YOU DON'T SEEM PLEASED TO SEE ME. WHAT'S THE MATTER?
LOOK, LITTLE BOWMAN, LET'S GET ONE THING STRAIGHT. I DON'T NEED YOU ANY MORE.

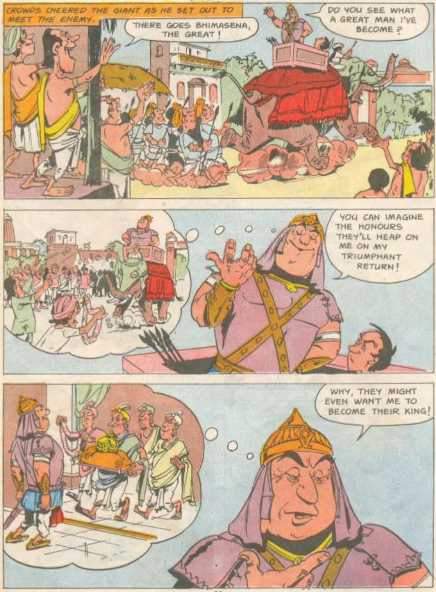

ALL RIGHT, YOU TAUGHT ME HOW TO DEAL WITH THE TIGER AND THE BUFFALO.
BUT WHAT IS SO GREAT ABOUT THAT, EH?
IF I HAD GIVEN IT SOME THOUGHT, I'M SURE I COULD HAVE COME UP WITH A SIMILAR, OR EVEN BETTER PLAN, MYSELF.
YOU HAVE SERVED YOUR PURPOSE. NOW LET US PART.
OH, SO THAT'S IT! SUCCESS HAS GONE TO HIS HEAD.
I ONLY HOPE IT DOES NOT LAND HIM INTO TROUBLE. ANYWAY, I'LL KEEP OUT OF HIS WAY FOR A WHILE.



LITTLE BOWMAN, THEREAFTER, KEPT OUT OF BHIMASENA'S WAY. BUT THE GIANT HARDLY MISSED HIM. HE NOW HAD SEVERAL FRIENDS, BOTH IN THE COURT...
...AND OUT OF IT. HE SPENT HIS DAYS IN EASE AND COMFORT.
THEN ONE DAY —
YOUR MAJESTY, WE ARE BEING ATTACKED!
THE KING OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM IS ON HIS WAY HERE WITH A LARGE ARMY.
YOUR MAJESTY, A MESSAGE FROM THE ENEMY.
"SEND OUT YOUR CHAMPION TO FIGHT WITH OUR OWN OR SURRENDER."
WE SHALL FIGHT! WE SHALL UNLEASH THE MIGHTY BHIMASENA ON THEM!

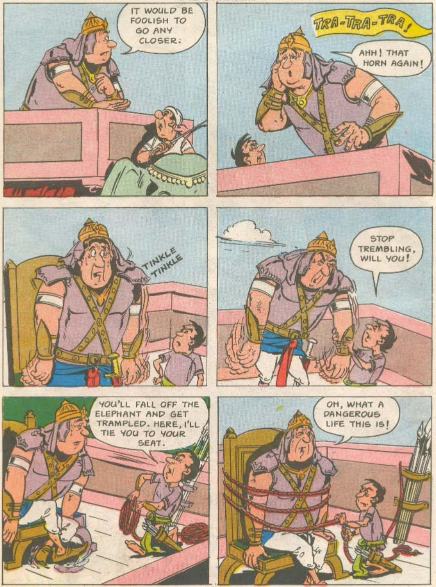

FEAR NOT, SIR. I SHALL SCATTER THEM LIKE CHAFF BEFORE THE WIND.
HOORAY!
I SHALL CRUSH THEIR CHAMPION LIKE THIS MELON!
HOORAY!
!
FETCH MY ARMOUR!
FOR ALL HIS BRAVADO, HE KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT WAR.
I'LL HAVE TO SAVE THAT FOOL SOMEHOW.


AS BHIMASENA SWAGGERED OUT OF THE PALACE AND WALKED MAJESTICALLY TOWARDS THE WAR ELEPHANT WHICH WAS WAITING FOR HIM —
BHIMASENA!
BHIMASENA, YOU'LL NEED SOMEONE TO CARRY YOUR SPEAR, WON'T YOU? I'LL COME WITH YOU.
GO, BHIMASENA. CRUSH THEIR CHAMPION AND WIN LAURELS FOR YOURSELF AND OUR KINGDOM.
VICTORY TO BHIMASENA.

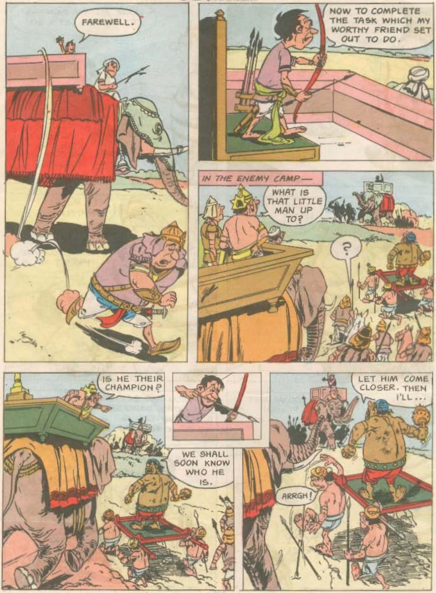

CROWDS CHEERED THE GIANT AS HE SET OUT TO MEET THE ENEMY.
THERE GOES BHIMASENA, THE GREAT!
DO YOU SEE WHAT A GREAT MAN I'VE BECOME ?
YOU CAN IMAGINE THE HONOURS THEY'LL HEAP ON ME ON MY TRIUMPHANT RETURN!
WHY, THEY MIGHT EVEN WANT ME TO BECOME THEIR KING!


I SHALL REFUSE OF COURSE, BUT WHAT IF THEY INSIST...
TRA-TRA-TRA
ER...DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING?
YES, THE SOUND OF A HORN.
A HORN? WHO WOULD BE BLOWING A HORN OUT HERE?
THE ENEMY, OF COURSE.
THERE THEY ARE!
!


WHAT FIERCE-LOOKING FELLOWS!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, BHIMASENA? YOU LOOK TROUBLED.
LOOK AT THEIR CHAMPION, LITTLE BOWMAN!
HE...HE LOOKS LIKE A WILD ANIMAL!


IT WOULD BE FOOLISH TO GO ANY CLOSER.
TRA-TRA-TRA!
AHH! THAT HORN AGAIN!
TINKLE TINKLE
STOP TREMBLING, WILL YOU!
YOU'LL FALL OFF THE ELEPHANT AND GET TRAMPLED. HERE, I'LL TIE YOU TO YOUR SEAT.
OH, WHAT A DANGEROUS LIFE THIS IS!


I WAS SO SAFE AND SECURE WHEN I WAS A WEAVER. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME NOW?
DON'T WORRY.
LEAVE ALL THE FIGHTING TO ME. NOW LET'S GO.
ARE YOU ORDERING THE ELEPHANT TO CHARGE?
YIEEEE! STOP, LITTLE BOWMAN! STOP!
LET ME GET DOWN, PLEASE.
YOU'VE TURNED OUT TO BE A GREAT COWARD, HAVEN'T YOU?
OH, MY! YOU'VE WET YOURSELF TOO!
I...I...
YES, YOU HAD BETTER RUN AWAY, BHIMASENA. A BATTLEFIELD IS NO PLACE FOR YOU.


FAREWELL.
NOW TO COMPLETE THE TASK WHICH MY WORTHY FRIEND SET OUT TO DO.
IN THE ENEMY CAMP—
WHAT IS THAT LITTLE MAN UP TO?
?
IS HE THEIR CHAMPION?
WE SHALL SOON KNOW WHO HE IS.
LET HIM COME CLOSER. THEN I'LL ...
ARRGH!


HEY!
!
ERR-HANN!
HELP! HELP!
EEE


AS THE SOLDIERS AND THE ELEPHANTS RUSHED ABOUT IN A STATE OF PANIC, LITTLE BOWMAN CHARGED INTO THEIR MIDST...
...PULLED THE ENEMY KING OFF HIS ELEPHANT...
...AND SPED AWAY WITH HIS PRISONER.
SAVE ME! SAVE ME!
LATER —
YOU HAVE PERFORMED AN AMAZING FEAT, LITTLE BOWMAN. SINGLE-HANDED YOU HAVE CAPTURED THE ENEMY AND PUT HIS ARMY TO FLIGHT.
FROM NOW ON, YOU SHALL HAVE AN HONOURED POSITION IN MY COURT— BETTER EVEN THAN THAT WHICH WAS HELD BY THAT COWARDLY BHIMASENA.
LITTLE BOWMAN BECAME A GREAT HERO AND HIS FAME SPREAD FAR AND WIDE. AS FOR BHIMASENA, HE WAS NEVER HEARD OF AGAIN.